

The Freshman Fifteen at Bloomsburg University

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Problem

Bloomsburg University students are known as being the huskies. New students come to Bloomsburg every year, leaving their hometown, to live away from their family and on their own. For many of these freshman, this is the first time they are living away from their home, family, and friends. They have to learn to take care of themselves by maintaining a healthy lifestyle, like a good diet, and daily exercise. Unfortunately, some college freshman make unhealthy eating and exercise habits. These poor habits ultimately contribute to an undesirable consequence in the future, weight gain.

Weight gain reported in college freshman has been in the past, and still is, a commonly reported problem. In fact, this problem is so well known that it has a nickname, “the freshman fifteen”. But what things may be causing this problem? Are the Bloomsburg huskies, actually becoming husky? In this paper I will discuss research of others, and some of my own to answer these questions.

Background

At Bloomsburg University, there are many opportunities for students to participate in daily exercise, and make healthy food choices. There is a fitness center and many healthy food options provided on campus. Contrarily, there are also many opportunities for students to make poor health choices. Burgers, fried foods, cakes, and other unhealthy foods are provided all over campus. Furthermore, many freshman partake in binge drinking alcohol at parties on the weekends. With all these good and bad choices easily available, which ones are the students making?¹ To help understand college student’s habits, I analyzed data from a survey taken on students about diet and exercise habits (Silliman, 2004).

¹ INTroduce

(Silliman, 2004)

The survey was taken on 471 college students, 57% were females, and 43% were male. The survey indicated that 44% of the women gained weight after coming to college, while only 75% of the men gained weight. Exercise levels were reported high for both men and women. The only conflicting statistic I found, was the large difference in alcohol consumption between men and women. The men showed that 15% of them consumed 22 or more alcoholic drinks a week, while only 2% of women consumed 22 or more.²

The data suggests that students generally have good exercise habits, and male students tend to drink more alcohol than female students.³ It also suggests that binge drinking made an impact on the male student's weight.

So some students have good exercise habits, but what about their eating habits? What are the eating and exercise habits of students at Bloomsburg University?

Method

In order to find out more about the weight gain and the Bloomsburg huskies, I did some research of my own on campus. The first study I conducted was an interview with freshmen students (Kennedy, 2015). The second study was conducted in the Commons cafeteria on campus (Kennedy, 2015). There I studied the eating behaviors of students as they chose their dinner. With my findings from this research I will conduct a conclusion. Are the Bloomsburg freshman dieting and exercising correctly, and if so why not?

² INsert

³ INterpret

Findings

(Kennedy, 2015)

In my research, I interviewed five random Bloomsburg freshman. The interviews took place between 1:00 and 2:00 PM on a Tuesday. I asked each of the students to recall everything they did that day as well as the amount of time doing those things. I found that four of the five students worked out that day for at least an hour. I also discovered that those same four students ate that day for at least 30 minutes. These findings suggest that freshman at Bloomsburg typically eat whole meals and receive exercise. After this research, I conducted research at the Commons cafeteria. So what are the Bloomsburg huskies really eating?

(Kennedy, 2015)

For the second part of my research, I mapped out locations in the Commons and studied them to learn about students eating habits.⁴ This study began at 6 PM and ended at 6:45 PM. In my study I found that the majority of people eating burgers and fried food were men, while the salad bar was visited more by women. I also found that most men chose soda as their beverage, while most women chose juice or water.⁵ This data suggests that the women at Bloomsburg typically choose a healthier diet, while men choose the unhealthier options.⁶

Conclusion

Based on my research, I found that the freshman fifteen is not a myth. Many colleges report that some students gain weight their freshman year. At Bloomsburg, I found that the

⁴ INtroduce

⁵ INsert

⁶ INterpret

reasons for weight gain in freshman could be linked to a poor diet and binge drinking. Lastly, I found that there are many huskies that exercise. Overall I would say Bloomsburg is a school where some students may be husky, but many students favor physical fitness.

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